Deciding Whether to Adopt MTSS-B:
A Discussion Guide

High-fidelity implementation of MTSS-B requires expert training and ongoing coaching; monitoring, evaluation and data-based decision-making; system-level administrative support; and reliable funding and human resource capacity. Given the significant resources required, school districts should carefully weigh whether implementing MTSS-B is a good fit at any particular time. Once your district's exploration team has had an opportunity to review local risk and protective factor data and current partnerships with community agencies, conducted an inventory of existing initiatives related to student social-emotional learning and mental health, and developed a shared understanding of MTSS-B, the team will be tasked with determining whether MTSS-B is an appropriate fit for the district's current needs and capacity.

Asking the right questions

The **MTSS-B Adoption Rating Tool**, which draws from the Hexagon Discussion & Analysis Tool,[1] provides a template for considering and making decisions about MTSS-B adoption. The tool can be used by the exploration team to help evaluate MTSS-B on important site indicators that tend to predict implementation success. The exploration team should consider and discuss:

Need

- ✓ Did we examine data to determine the social-emotional learning and mental health needs of our students?
- ✓ What are the identified needs of our students?
- ✓ What evidence suggests that MTSS-B can address these identified needs?

Fit

- ✓ How does MTSS-B fit with our district's priorities?
- ✓ How does MTSS-B fit with family and community values in our area, including those of culturally and linguistically specific populations?
- ✓ How will MTSS-B intersect with other district/community initiatives?

Capacity to implement

- ✓ Do we have/can we realistically obtain financial resources to support MTSS-B? (Consider training, ongoing coaching, curricula, stipends/release time for team member functions, etc.)
- ✓ Do we have/can we realistically obtain human resources and staffing capacity to implement MTSS-B? (E.g., education, credentials, content knowledge, cultural and language match)
- ✓ What administrative practices and policies do we need to develop/refine to support MTSS-B?
- ✓ Is leadership knowledgeable about and supportive of MTSS-B?
- ✓ Do we have/can we realistically obtain the capacity to collect and use data to inform ongoing monitoring and improvement of MTSS-B? Do we have adequate data systems?

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[1] *Metz, A. & Louison, L. (2019) The Hexagon Tool: Exploring Context. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Based on Kiser, Zabel, Zachik, & Smith (2007) and Blase, Kiser & Van Dyke (2013).*

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Securing buy-in from all stakeholder groups

The decision to move toward an integrated system of school and community mental health requires communication among building-level administrators; school teachers, staff, and teams; mental health clinicians from both the school and community; and ideally, students and families. Some districts may even need to seek official approval from their school board. Either way, in order to garner sufficient buy-in, we recommend that the exploration team communicate with and seek feedback from their key stakeholders.

It is especially important to discuss with community mental health partners – early and often – how the integrated service delivery system envisioned under MTSS-B differs from traditional co-located models of school mental health. The **Role of the Mental Health Agency in MTSS-B** guidance document offers important considerations for this discussion, including level of commitment, participation on MTSS-B district- and school-level teams, system collaboration, clinical services, and monitoring of fidelity and outcomes.

We've decided to adopt MTSS-B – now what?

Once MTSS-B is officially adopted, the district exploration team becomes broader and more inclusive to form the District-Community Leadership Team (DCLT; see **DCLT Guidance** for more detail). This DCLT coordinates and oversees installation of MTSS-B, including selection of demonstration sites (see **Selecting Demonstration Schools** guidance) and a deeper review of the data, systems, and processes required for MTSS-B (see **Establishing MTSS-B Routines**).

Eber, L., Barrett, S., Perales, K., Jeffrey-Pearsall, J., Pohlman, K., Putnam, R, Splett, J., & Weist, M.D. (2019). Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide PBIS, Volume 2: An Implementation Guide. Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education). Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon Press.